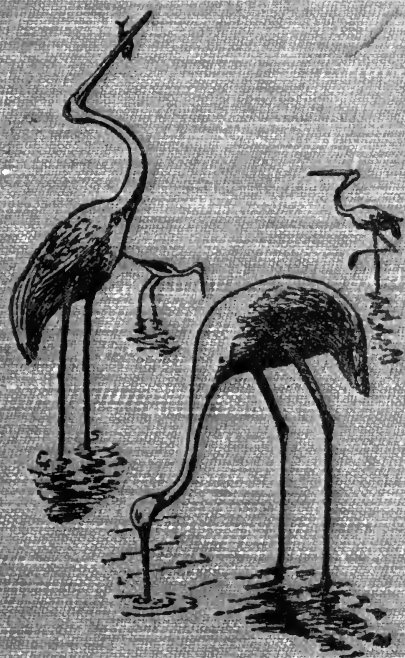




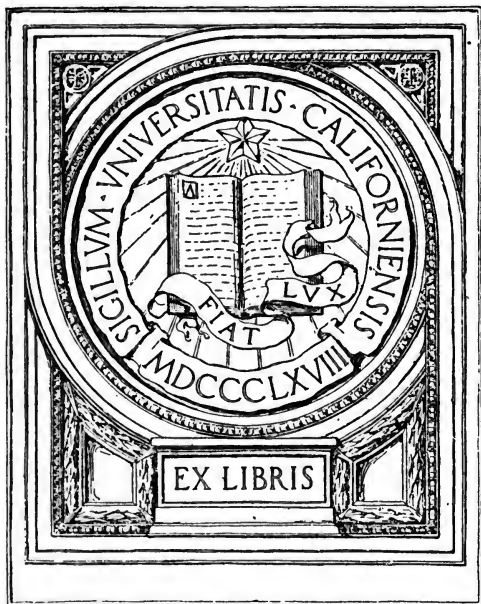
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HOW AND WHY STORIES



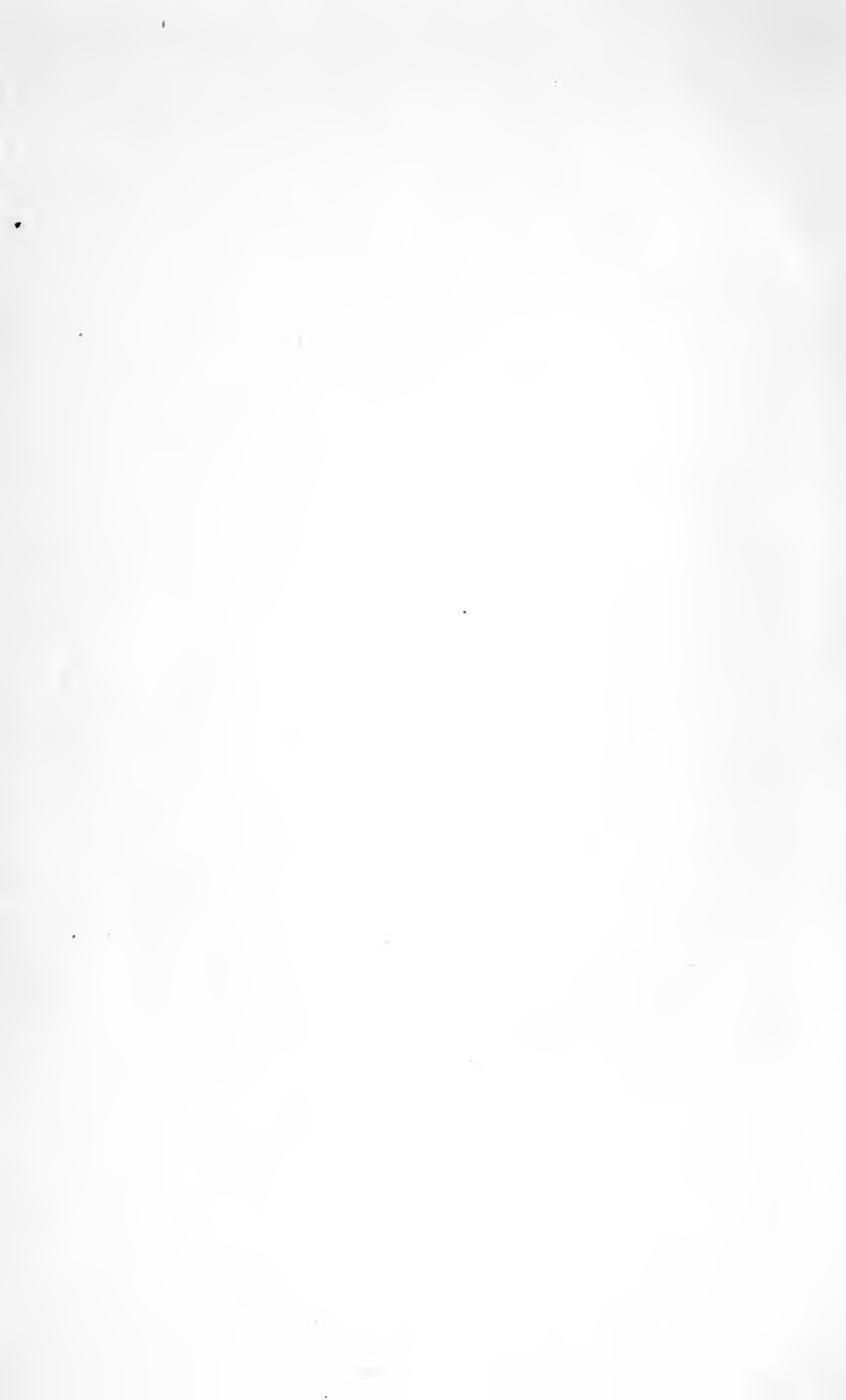
JOHN C. BRANNER

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THE
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He cotch a bettah holt, an' he brace his feet agin de wall, an' he pull
so ha'd dat he scraped all fo' o' de snake's laigs clean off.

HOW AND WHY STORIES

RECORDED BY
JOHN C. BRANNER



NEW YORK
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1921

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Class 1900

1900

IN AFFECTIONATE MEMORY
OF THE NARRATORS

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INTRODUCTION

These stories gave me so much pleasure when I was a child that I have written them down as nearly as I can recall them in the hope that they may interest other generations of children.

I am often asked if they are African folk-lore stories brought to this country by the slaves: they are too clearly under the influence of biblical history to have had such an origin.

The reader must not suppose that any irreverence is meant by the familiar references to “de good Lawd an’ de Angel Gabriel.”

My attention has been called to certain inconsistencies in the spelling used in these stories. In justification of some of them I can only say that the negroes with whom I was acquainted did not always use the same variation of a given word. For example, for the word “going” they might say either *gwine*, *goin’*, or *going*; and for the word “just” they might say either *jis*, *jist*, *jus*, *just*, or

des. It has therefore seemed best to write them down as nearly as possible in the spirit and language in which they were told me without concerning myself with inconsistencies of which the narrators themselves were not aware.

As the artists' names have disappeared in the reproductions of the drawings I owe it to them to say that the natural history illustrations were made by Mr. W. S. Atkinson, of Stanford University, and the unnatural ones were invented by Mr. R. K. Culver of Yorba Linda, California.

J. C. B.

Stanford University, California.

April 9, 1921.

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HOW AND WHY STORIES

A MERE MATTER OF THE FEELINGS

(To be omitted by those who are in a hurry.)

THIS is merely by way of explanation or introduction and is chiefly personal, and it can safely be skipped by those who do not care for explanations and things personal.

I was born in the South “fo’ de wah,” and as my parents were slave holders, I grew up among the negroes. To me they seemed vastly more interesting and more human than white folks. During my early childhood negro girls or negro women were my nurses and keepers all day long and it required a lot of parental authority and something else that I decline to name, to keep me away from their cabins at night. I remember most vividly one particular night when I was called in from a negro cabin and brought to judgment in the presence of the assembled family. After a solemn lecture by my mother, and after she evidently thought I must be under conviction of sin, she

asked me if I thought the negroes were more interesting and better company than the white folks. In my innocence I replied meekly, "Yes, ma'am!" Thereafter my pursuit of happiness was interfered with in various ways, but I still managed to slip through the picket lines occasionally, and to sit for a few blissful minutes on the pile of pine knots at the corner of the fireplace in a negro cabin that was presided over by an old man or old woman.

The conversation at such times and in such places—at least in so far as it impressed me—was always easily understood, and it was always full of dramatic interest. Even the theological instruction that I received from the negroes was realistic, clean-cut, and convincing, though it must be confessed that it was on the whole rather whimsical and only remotely related to orthodox teachings.

I recall the fact too that my questions on religious subjects were almost always answered without any hesitation, and not infrequently the answers were so clinched that serious doubt was quite impossible.

It was in these negro cabins that I first heard many of the folk-lore stories published later by Joel Chandler Harris, and a lot more besides.

Among the dearest of the old negro friends who met so satisfactorily the requirement of my childish imagination were Aunt Ellen, Uncle Peter, and Aunt Sarah or Aunt Say as we called her. When I got big enough to wield a hoe, the hoe was placed in my hands and I was required to wield it, and to keep up in the corn field with negro boys of my own age; and as we small boys were usually under the immediate supervision of a grown person, I usually managed to get one of these imaginative theological elders for my sponsor. And it was in the long corn rows along the bottoms of the French-broad river that I heard from one of the old negroes these and many other stories that have now partly or entirely escaped my memory.

It is not strange that, under the circumstances, slavery seemed to me a natural and happy state of human existence.

Then came the civil war and after that the former slaves were taken in hand by political organizations and by the fishers in the muddy waters of the times. They were inveigled away from their former homes and friends, and finally left to the waves and winds of fate like so much flotsam and jetsam of the war.

Meanwhile I had been sent to school away from home. It was, I believe, in the summer of 1867 that I returned home for a short visit, and on inquiring about our former slaves I heard that Aunt Ellen lived about eight miles away, and that she had sent word to me to be sure to come to see her when I was home on a visit. And of course I went.

I found Aunt Ellen in a state of poverty and wretchedness that went to my heart. But she had for me a good dinner of corn bread and bacon and greens, and she told me all her domestic troubles, of which she had a choice assortment. She had a drunken loafer for a husband, and a house full of children in various stages of nakedness and dirt, and growing up in shiftlessness with all the accompaniments of such conditions. Her health was not good, but she had to work hard "whedder or no," early and late, to keep the family together and alive. To me it was a sad, sad story. It seemed to me that the contrast between her condition as a slave and her condition as a free woman was an overwhelming and unanswerable argument in favor of slavery. Besides I had been living in the midst of that sort of arguments ever since the slaves had been freed. And I told her what I thought, or

supposed I thought, in some such words as these: "Aunt Ellen, you were a lot better off as a slave than you are now. You had a better house to live in, better food to eat, and better clothes to wear, and no doctor's bills to pay. You never had to worry about providing for your family, because you knew that father and mother would attend to that. If you got sick you had a doctor to look after you, and you had no bills to pay. Don't you think you were better off as a slave?"

And this is what Aunt Ellen replied: "De Lawd bless yo' soul, chile, dat's a fac'; hit's jes lak you ben a sayin'. I knows I had mo' to eat an' mo' to wear, an' a better house to live in, an' all o' dem things, an' you all was mighty good to me; an' I didn' have none o' dese here doctah's bills to pay. But Law', honey, atter all, dah's de feelin's!"

From that day to this I have had no more to say in favor of human slavery.

II

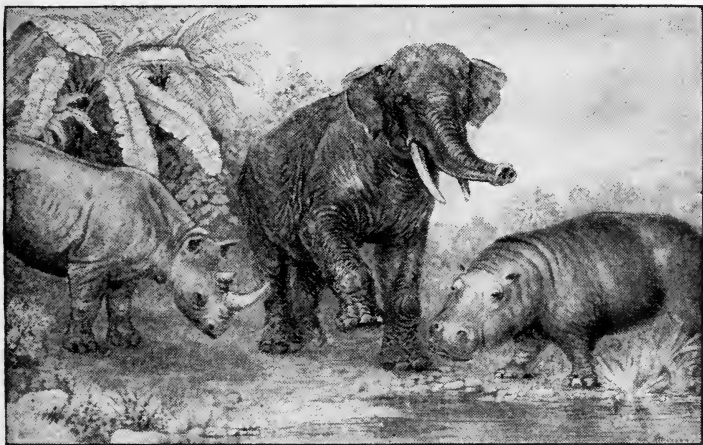
WHY THE PALMS OF A NEGRO'S HANDS ARE WHITE

I have been familiar since childhood with many of the stories told by Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus, but the explanation of why the negro is black as given by him (Uncle Remus, his songs and sayings, 163, New York, 1895) is quite different from the story as I know it.

LA, chile, you can't neva trus' de debble to do nothin' right, honey. An' what's mo' ye can't neva tell nothin' about de insides o' folks by what dey looks lak on de outsides. Dey's been a mighty sight o' trouble in dis worl' all along o' dependin' on de debble to do what ye tole him to do, an' along o' some folks a b'lievin' dat 'cause a nigga's black on de outsides, he's obleegee to be black all de way thu.

Hit's des lak I done tole ye: dis yer trouble done started up a mighty long time ago. Hit was dat ve'y same week when dey created de worl', an' mo'n dat, hit was a Sa'day.

De Good Lawd he'd been a workin' mighty hard eva sense long 'fo day a Monday mawnin' a creatin' things. O' co'se de Angel Gabriel was a helpin' all he could, but he was jist a roust-about an' a mortar-mixer, an' neva done none o' de rale hard creatin' work.



It took a awful lot o' mortar to make de elephantses an' de hippopotomy hosses an' de rhinossery hosses.

An' I tell ye what, honey, it was a heap bigger job dan de Good Lawd thought it was a gwine to be when he first stahted in. It wa'nt no trouble to create some o' de big things cause den he could see jes what he was a doin', but de Angel Gabriel com-

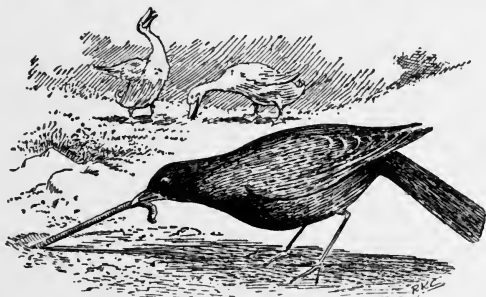
plain dat it took a awful lot o' mortar to make de elephantsses an' de hippypotomy hosses an' de rhinossery hosses. But de hardes' part was dat he had to mek lots an' lots o' things dat was so little and teenchy dat he couldn't see 'em, an' dat's how he come to make so many mistakes. Besides dat he had to show 'em all jes' what to do an' jes' how to do it. He ha' to larn de smoke to go up, an' he ha' to larn de water to run down hill, an' he ha' to show de birds how to fly an' de fish how to swim, and to git 'em all stahted to keepin' house. An' on top o' all dat, a whole lot o' 'em got to makin' trouble, for de cats was a chasin' de mice, an' de dogs was a chasin' de cats, an' de two ducks done eat up de two June bugs, an' de robins was a pullin' all de red worms outen de groun', so he had to make two mo' June bugs an' two mo' red worms. Dey was a while dar when things was a gittin' pufickly scandalous, an' it look jes like de whole meetin' was gwine to break up in a big rumpus, for de mo' he created, de harder it was to keep 'em from fightin' an' quarrelin' an' eatin' each other up.

De Good Lawd, he was a gittin' powerful tired, he was, an' he was a wishin' for Sa'day night to

come roun' so's he could knock off an' clean up an' shave, an' take a little res'.

De sun wuz' bran' new in dem days, an' it wuz a whole lot hotter dan it is now; an' it wuz jes a brilin' up dah in de sky, an' de trees dey wan't big enough yit to make no shade to 'mount to nothin'.

De Angel Gabriel was a mixin' de morta', an' de Good Lawd was a creatin' all de different kinds



De two ducks done eat up de two June bugs, an' de robins was a pullin' all de red worms outen de groun'.

o' critters, an' de different kinds o' folks. An' wheneva he made a sheep o' a goat o' any o' dem fo'-legged kinds, he stood 'em down on dey feet out in de sun so's to sorter dry out befo' he blowed de bref o' life into 'em. For dat was de las' thing he allus done jes fo' he quit work o' nights. But when he made de two-legged folks, he couldn't stan'

'em up on dey feet, cause dey wuz so long an' ganglin' like dat dey'd fall ovah; so he jes stan' 'em all down on dey all-fo's jes lak he done stood de goats an' de sheeps.

Long about noon de dinnah hawn blowed, an' de mules brayed, an' de Good Lawd put down his tools, he did, an' he wipe de sweat off'n his face, an' him an' de Angel Gabriel stahted up to de big white house fo' dey dinnah. But de Good Lawd knowed dey wuz a whole lot o' work dat hatter be done afore night, 'cause de nex' day was a gwinter be Sunday, an' he's obleege to go to meetin'.

Well, suh, he was a walkin' along up de big road dat goes up to de big white house, a chawin' tobacker, des lak I tole you, an' he pass Ole Nick a hangin' aroun' de front gate a lookin' fo' odd jobs an' a waitin' till de othah folks wuz done dey dinnah, 'cause o' co'se dey didn' low sich as him to eat at de same table wid de quality.

Soon as de Good Lawd seed Ole Nick he seem to eremembah sump'n like, an' he call out:—

“Look'y here, Nick, you take dis yer bucket o' black paint an' go down dere to de lot whar I been a workin', an' paint a few o' dem ar sheep, an' you can hev 'em fo' yo' own.”

Den he gone on into de dinin' room, an' Ole Nick he tuk de paint bucket an' went down to de pastyer to pick out his sheep an' to paint 'em.

Well, suh, right da's whar de trouble commence.



An' he ups, he does, an' paints some o' de bes' lookin' ones uv 'em
black des lak he done painted de sheep.

Stidder paintin' some o' de liklies' o' de sheep, like othah folks 'ud a done, Ole Nick he went an' painted a few o' de sheep, an' den he seed some o' dem white folks a standin' aroun' dar on dey all-fo's a dryin', an' he ups, he does, an' he paints some

o' de bes' lookin' ones uv 'em black des lak he done painted de sheep. But o' co'se he couldn' paint de pams o' dey han's an' de bottoms o' dey feet, 'cause dey wuz flat on de groun' an' he couldn' get at 'em.



But atter all, honey, dey's all white on de inside des lak othah folks.

Bimeby de Good Lawd he come back, but he was mighty busy all de res' o' dat Sa'day aternoon a finishin' up de creatin' o' de worl' an' a gittin' ready fo' Sunday, so he neveh tuk no notice o' what debblement dat Ole Nick bin up to.

An' all dat time dem ar black white folks been a standin' out dere in dat brilin' sun where de black colah mek it so hot dat dey hair des nachely

curl right up an' git all kinky on dey hades.

Bimeby, long to'ds night when it wuz so dark you couldn' hardly see nothin' de Good Lawd done finish his work, an' he step up to de folkes an' blow de bref o' life into 'em 'ithout noticin' dat dey wuz anything out'n de way with any uv 'em.

An' what's mo' he aint nevah notice it yit.

Well, suh, you done see how it all happen: some o' dem are white folks dat was a standin' wid dey han's an' dey feet on de groun' an' got painted black, dey come out culled all 'cep'n de pams o' dey han's an' de bottoms o' dey feet, an' de bran' new sun done make dey hair kinky 'cause it wuz so hot.

But atter all, honey, dey's all white on de inside des lak othah folks, an' dey chillen dey's all des de same way.

III

WHY THE SNAKE HAS NO FEET

I DUN tuk notice dat when it come bed time, you bettah go to bed an' go to sleep. Dese yer folks dat stays up late o' nights a list'nin' to de temptation o' de debble is sho' to git intah trouble soonah or latah.

An' what's mo' hit's been dat a way evah sense way back dah in de beginnin', an' it look mighty like hit's a gwine to keep on a bein' dat a way. Hit was dat ah very kin' o' foolishness what mek de snake lose his laigs an' his good looks.

'Cause when de Good Lawd fus' made de snake o' co'se he make him wid laigs jes like de othah crittahs, an' wid feet like de turkle's feet. He wan't so long an' slendah like he is now, but he was sortah short an' chunky like a rabbit, an' he had a stubby tail.

Well, suh, when de crittahs was fus' made de Good Lawd knowed he's gotter keep 'em outen de reach o' Ole Nick until dey sortah git acquainted

wid each othah an' wid de lay o' de lan', so he shut mos' uv 'em up in de Gyarden o' Eden, an' he put up a big rock wall all round it, wid de rocks so clost togethah dat yo' couldn' see thu' nowhares; so's Ole Nick couldn't git at 'em o' nights.

But one night Ole Nick tuk an' bo'ed a hole thu' de wall wid de eend o' his tail to see if he couldn' git a holt o' some o' de crittahs inside, or to see if he couldn' fool 'em an' git 'em to come outside. Well, suh, he bo'ed an' he bo'ed an' he bo'ed till he wo' about a inch offen de eend o' his ole tail.

All dis time de snake was a settin' down dah close up to de wall a noddin' an' a wonderin' what in de roun' worl' was a makin' dat ar quare noise. All at once de eend o' Ole Nick's tail come thu' de wall an' skeered him so he give a big jump jes lak a frog. Den he went back and look at de hole, he did, an' 'pear like he hear somebody a talkin' sortah low, an' he listen, an' sho nuff he hear Ole Nick a tellin' him to come outside 'cause dey was a gwine to have some sort o' gwine on dah dat ve'y night.

An' de snake he 'low dat he's much obleege fur de invite, but he's afraid he can't come dis time; besides it's already a gittin' putty late.

An' Ole Nick he respon' dat de clock ain't struck

eight yit (an' dat was a big lie!) an' dey was plenty o' time to look aroun' fo' bed time, an' dat he can have a fine time an' git back long fo' de white folks was gone to bed. An' he tole him he could git back thu' de hole in de wall an' stick a cawn cob in it so's nobody's evah know he's been outside o' de gyarden. Den he went an' tole de snake a great long rigamale about de doin's dey was a gwine to have dat night an' how dis was de las' chance.

An' de snake he was so young an' ign'ant dat he b'lieve ev'y wo'd o' what Ole Nick say, an' bimeby he say he'll come out jis fo' a few minits, but he's got to come straight back. An' when he said dat, Ole Nick knowed he'd git him.

An' den de snake he ax Ole Nick how he's a gwine to git out, an' Ole Nick lie tole him to sortah scrooch up an' come thu' de hole in de wall. But de snake he couldn't no mo'n git de eend o' his nose in de hole. Den Ole Nick tole him to stick his tongue thu' de hole, an' when he stuck his tongue thu', Ole Nick he grab it an' he pull so hard dat he split de snake's tongue right spang in two in de middle. Den he tole de snake to dip his haid in de watah, an' den to push his nose in de hole jes as ha'd as he could, an' when he done dat he got his

nose thu' so's Ole Nick could git a holt ov it; den he grab de snake by de nose, an' he pull so dat snake's neck been pulled out about a foot long, an' den he spit on his hans an' cotch a bettah holt, he did, an' he brace his feet agin de wall, and he pull so ha'd dat he scraped all fo' o' de snake's laigs clean off, an' he pull an' stretch his body out so long dat when he was all thu' de hole he look jes' like a piece o' rope.

Law, chile, but dat snake was mad! An' he want to fight Ole Nick, but 'twant no use. His feet was all gone, an' he couldn' so much as stan' up, so all he could do was to stick out his forked tongue at him.

But Ole Nick he sorter grin at de snake, he did, an' he tole him: "Tain't no use, honey; you's on my side now, an' I spec you'll hatter stay here."

An' f'um dat day on ev'y body b'lieve de snake's in cahoots wid Ole Nick. An' he nevah got back his feet, an' he neveh got back his shape, an' he nevah got back de good will o' de 'spectable folks. Dey's allus 'spicious ov him, eben when he don't mean no ha'm to nobody.

An dat's what mek me say what I does:—dat dey don't no good come o' listenin' to de debble.



He cotch a bettah holt, an' he brace his feet agin de wall, an' he pull
so ha'd dat he scraped all fo' o' de snake's laigs clean off.



An' he nevah got back his feet, an' he nevah got back
his shape, an' he nevah got back de good will o' de
'spectable folks.

He's allus ready to promise you mo'n he can do, an'
to tell you things he don't know nothin' about. An'
what's mo', young folks ain't got no business set-
tin' up too late o' nights.

IV

HOW THE STARS WERE MADE

EV'A'BODY knows dat dey's two worl's—one below de blue sky whar de stahs shine at night, an' one on de othah side o' de sky whar de city o' de big bright light is. Sometimes it do look like de worl' on dis side was de main one, but law chile, it ain't nothin' alongside o' de one on de othah side o' de stahs.

Right dah at de ve'y fust de Good Lawd knowed he gotter keep things from gittin' mixed up, or else dey'd be a lot o' trouble. So one o' de fust things he done was to fix it so de onery people in de worl' couldn't git to heab'n by any back do', an' so dey couldn't slip thu' de do' when de good ones was a gwine in. But how wuz he gwine ter do it?—dat's what I ax ye.

Well, suh, he knowed dat betwixt de nachel badness o' some folks, an' de help dey'd git from Ole Nick, he'd hatter be mighty keerful.

So atter ruminatin' a long time 'bout how he's

gwinter do it, he mek a great big pa'tition outen de hahdes' kin' o' blue steel to sep'rate dis worl' from de nex' one whar de city o' de big bright light is. An' den he unroll dat big sheet o' steel right acrost de whole sky an' fasten it down tight all roun' de eens, an' he lef' jis one do' fo de good folks to go thu' when dey go to he'ben. Well, suh, at fust dat make it mighty dark on de lowah side, so de Good Lawd he went on de top side wid a pick ax an' he pick a lot o' little teenchy holes thu' de sky so de light o' de bright city shined thu' an' mek all o' dem little stahs what ye see o' nights.

But still it wa'n't light enough to see good, an' de Good Lawd knowed dat it wouldn't do to chop no big holes in de sky, 'cause ef he did Ole Nick an' some o' dese yer onery folks'd be a gittin' thu' into de New Jeruzalem.

So den he mek de sun an' de moon an' a few mo' triflin' little stahs, an' he put em all on de lowah side o' de blue steel sky fo' to warm de worl' in de day time, an' to light it up a little bettah in de night.

An' dat's de reason I done tole ye dat what's on dis side o' de sky don't amount to much along side o' what's on de tothah side of it. An' ye bettah not forgit about dat, honey.

WHY THE OWL STAYS UP NIGHTS

YOU done tek notice dat whenever a critter start in dis worl' wid a habit it stayed wid him all his life, an' not only dat but he pass it along down to his chillen an' his granchillen. An' wheddah de critters got two laigs or fo' laigs or mo' laigs it work des de same way. Anothah thing is dat if you want to see anything you mus' open yo' eyes.

Dah's de owl: at de ve'y fus' he was lak de othah birds; he had de same kin' o' eyes lak de othah birds, an' he fly aroun' an' sing in de day time, an' when it come dark he went to roos' an' stuck his hed undah his wing an' slep till day-break des lak de othahs.

But 'twant long befo' he got into de habit o' settin' up nights an' a callin' out "who-who," an' he ain't nevah lef' it off no mo' to dis ve'y day.

Endurin' de week dat de critters was all created an' was jes' a larnin' how to keep house, de

Good Lawd tuk notice dat dey was sum'n a gwine wrong o' nights, an' he feel mighty jubous about it. Nex' mawnin' he fin' de pig's tail curled up; de deer's tail an' de goat's tail wuz cut clean off; an' de possum an' de rat done had de hair all pulled offen dey tails; de duck done los' his fore legs, de snake done los' all o' his'n, an' de Guinea hen an' de turkey gobbler done los' all de haiah offen dey huids, an' nobody knowed what's a gwine to happen nex'.

He 'spicioned dat it was some o' Ole Nick's doin's, but he nevah said nothin' to nobody, an' he ax de owl if he wouldn' stay up dat night an' keep a look out an' see what was de matter an' how



He got into de habit o' settin' up o' nights an' a callin' out "who-who," an' he ain't nevah lef' it off no mo' to dis ve'y day.

it all happen. An' de owl he say he'd be mighty proud to stay up, only he's afraid he couldn' see ve'y good in de dahk. Den de Good Lawd he tole him dat all he gotter do to see in de dahk is to open his eyes widah. So dey fix it up dat-a-way. An' when it come dark de owl nevah go to bed, but jes' open his eyes a little widah, an' git out in de open where he could look aroun' ovah de country. An' ev'y time it git a little dahker de owl'd open his eyes a little widah, an' he ain't nevah had no trouble a seein' all de carryin' on.

An' sho' nuff 'long 'bout midnight he seed Ole Nick a tyin' knots in de horses' manes. An' de owl call out "who-who, who-who, who-who-ah?" Wid dat Ole Nick was so skeered dat he run away an' lef' de horses, an' struck out across de country in de dahk. But de owl open his eyes widah 'an evah, an' he followed atter him, an' ev'y once in a while he'd call out "who-who, who-who, who-who-ah!"

Well, suh, he sho' did skeer Ole Nick away; but when it come daylight Mr. Owl had his eyes so wide open dat he couldn't shet 'em, an' de bright sun give him a powerful haid-ache.

Den de Good Lawd tole de owl dat seein' as he'd

been up all de night befo' he could fin' hissself a shady place an' sleep all day to mek up fo' de loss o' sleep de night befo'.

But when night come roun' again de owl was rested, an' he didn' have no mo' haid-ache, an' he feel so scrumpshus dat he stay up dat night too. After dat he done got de habit, an' he had it evah sense.

VI

WHY THE CATFISH HAS NO SCALES

WHEN de debble gits a good holt o' ye he's boun' to leave his mark on ye; an' what's mo' he'll leave dat mark on yo' chillen an' yo' granchillen.

An' dat's de way it wuz wid de catfish. If he'd a kep out'n de debble's han's he'd a ben a whole lot bettah lookin' dan what he is, an' so'd his chillen.

Ye done took notice dat de catfish ain't got no scales lak de othah fishes, but he wa'n't allus dat away. When he wuz fus' made he was all covah'd wid red an' yaller an' blue scales accordin' to de kin' o' catfish he wuz, an' he wuz one' o' de ve'y hansomes' fishes in de rivah till Ole Nick got a holt ov him one day.

Hit happen mo' o' less about dis away. Hit was a Friday mawnin' dat de Good Lawd created de fishes, an' when he turn 'em all loose in de rivah hit was a mighty fine sight I tell ye. An' day wa'n't

no mo' hansom fish in de crowd dan de catfish wid his red an' yaller an' blue scales.

Well, suh, de Good Lawd done created all de diff'ent kin's o' fishes in de fo'noon, an' he 'low to mek de chickens an' de turkeys an' de geese in de atternoon. When it come dinnah time dey put away de tools an' lock de do' an' put de key in his pocket an' went along up to de big house to git a snack o' som'n to eat.

Aftah dinnah de Good Lawd an' de Angel Gabriel was a walkin' along back down de big road a pickin' dey teeth, an' a talkin' about wheddah dey bettah mek de birds wid scales lak de fishes o' wid fethahs, when lo an' beholes dey come across Ole Nick along side o' de road a scrapin' de scales offen some catfish he done cotch out'n de rivah. An' de Good Lawd says, sezee:

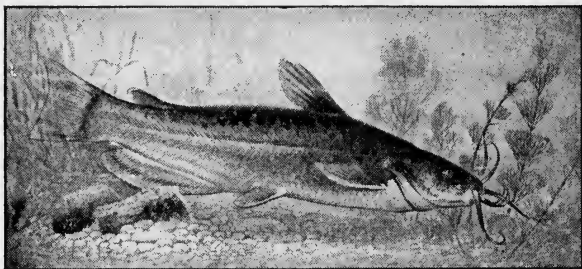
"Look'y here, Nick, what in de name o' common sense a' you o doin' wid dem 'are fish?"

An' Ole Nick he up an' say: "Yas, suh, I tuk notice dat it was a Friday, an' I thought I'd jes' have me a fine fish dinnah; an' so when I saw how crowded de fish wuz in de rivah, I thought it 'ud sort o' help mattahs if I'd thin 'em out a bit. So I jes retch down an' grab a few o' dem catfish dat

was handy to git, an' I was jes' a gittin' 'em ready fo' to fry when you 'uns come along."

An' de Good Lawd he respon': "Well, you looky heah; you jes' put dem fish back in de watah an' go on about yo' business, you triflin' good-fo-nothin' black rascal!"

An' he made him put all de fish back in de watah,



But de scales dey nevah growed back no mo', an' from dat time on de catfish ain't had no mo' scales.

an' whar de scales was scraped off it hurted so dat de catfish went down to de bottom an' rolled ovah in de mud to suage de pain. Bimeby de pain go away, but de scales dey nevah growed back no mo' an' from dat time on de catfish ain't had no mo' scales.

An' dat's what mek me tell you dat you bettah allus keep out o' retch o' de debble; an' if you don't, he'll mek trouble fo' you an' all you kin folks. Besides dat, you won't be so good lookin'.



De Good Lawd jes mek de tadpole, an' de frog he come along a few days later.

VII

HOW THE TADPOLE LOST HIS TAIL

WHEN people don't do what dey's tole to do dey allus gits into trouble soonah or latah. An' dat's jis what happen wid de tadpole.

You done tuk notice dat de good book don't say nothing 'bout de creatin o' de frogs. An' dis here business o' de tad-

pole 'splains why it happen so. De fac' o' de mat-tah is dat de Good Lawd didn't mek de frog; he jes mek de tadpole, an' de frog he come along a few days latah jis lak I's gwine ter tell ye.

If you evah made any tadpoles you done tek notice dat it's jis as easy to mek a hundred of 'em as it is to mek one. An dat's de reason why de Good Lawd, when he fus mek de tadpole, didn't mek jis one, but he mek a whole lot ov 'em so's dey'd sorter be company fo' each othah.

Well, suh, he mek a whole lot o' tadpoles jis' lak I tole ye, an' when dey was all finished dey was so many dat dey was all roun' on de groun' in de way, an' you couldn' walk about 'ithout steppin' on a lot of 'em. So de Good Lawd, jis to git 'em out o' de road as much as anything else, he tole 'em to go 'long down dah in de cawn fiel' nex' to de creek an' to be a pullin' de weeds. An' de tadpoles dey all went down in de fiel', but it was a mighty hot day, an' dey feel mighty lazy, an' Ole Nick he happen along dar 'bout dat time like he always does, an' he says, sezee:

“Boys, dey's a mighty fine swimmin' hole right down dar in de creek.”

An' de tadpoles dey respon': “Yessa' I spec'

dey is, but dey sont us down here to pull dese heah weeds."

An' Ole Nick he say dat o' co'se dey's a gwine ter pull de weeds, but how dey could pull 'em up a whole lot faster ef dey jis had a little swim fust. Den he 'suaded 'em to jes' take a look at de watah, cause o' cose dat wouldn't do no harm. Well, suh, no sooner did de tadpoles git a sight o' de watah dan dey forgit all 'bout pullin' weeds, an' dey ev'y one ob'm went in a swimmin' in de creek an' it seem lak dey nevah did have sich a good time, sho's yo' bawn.

De Good Lawd he's been mighty busy dem days, an' it seem lak he done forgit about de tadpoles; but one day Ole Nick went up an' remark sort o' keerless like dat some o' dese here new critters dat he was a creatin' was putty triflin' when it come to doin' what dey's bin tole. An' de Good Lawd ax him what he's a talkin' 'bout; an' Ole Nick he respon' dat he done sent dem fool tadpoles to pull up de weeds in de cawn fiel', but stidder dat dey'd all gwine in a swimmin', an' dey hadn't pull a single weed, an' dat too when de cawn fiel' was a gittin to be a puffick sight.

So de Good Lawd he call up de tadpoles an' he

ax' em what dey been up to; an' dey up an' tole him dat dey been in a swimmin'; an' he tole 'em dat he didn' so much min' dere gwine in a swimmin', but he couldn' have folks aroun' what didn' do lak he tole 'em. An' he tole 'em dat he's a gwine to cut dey tails off 'cause dey didn' min' him. An de tadpoles dey begin to cry an' to beg him not to chop dey tails off 'cause dey couldn' swim 'ithout 'em, an' if dey happen to fall in de watah dey'd sho' be drowned onless dey could swim. But de Good Lawd he tole 'em dat he's a gwine to give 'em some



An' to dis day you notice dat de tadpole nevah grows up, but he loses his tail an' he gits some laigs an' turns to a frog.

laigs so's dey could swim some, but he want 'em to eremembah dat dey was sum'n else to do in dis here worl' besides a gwine in a swimmin'. So he up an' chop off all dey tails, but he give 'em some laigs an' made frogs out'n every one of

'em an' he tole 'em to go on 'bout dey business. An' to dis day you notice dat de tadpole nevah

grows up, but he loses his tail an' he gits some laigs an' turns to a frog. Anothah thing is dat tadpoles is mighty po' han's to pull weeds. An' it's all along o' dey not doin' what dey bin tole to do.

VIII

WHY THE PIG GRUNTS

YO' tak' notice, honey, dat no good nevah come o' bein' greedy, no mattah how hongry yo' is. An' yo' notice too dat mos' o' dese here troubles commence way back dar endurin' de week when de Good Lawd was so busy a creatin' de worl'. De fac' is dat he didn' have nobody to help him cep'n' jes' de Angel Gabriel, an' it kep *him* mighty busy a mixin' de mortah, an' when anything went wrong dey wan't nobody to look atter it. O'cose Ole Nick was dar, but he was one o' dese here kin' what's allus a gittin' hisself an' othah folks into trouble.

I done tole you 'bout how de Good Lawd create de crittahs an' stood 'em down on de groun' fur to dry. Well, suh, when he made de pig he made him wid a great long nose like a elephant, so's he could pick up things an' put em in his mouth, an' he could scratch his own back wid de eend o' his nose.

But de pig he had sich a big appetite dat he was jes' nachelly hongry all de time, an' dat ar' appetite o' his'n got Mr. Pig into trouble right da at de staht, an' it's bin a gittin' him into trouble evah sense.



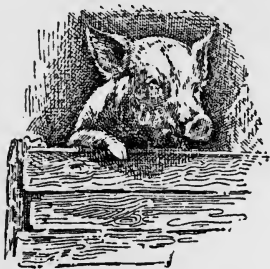
Dat 'ar pig eat de cawn wid his mouf an' feed it in wid his long nose so fas' dat de yother critters couldn't so much as git a tas' o' nothin'.

You' see de Good Lawd make de pig on a Friday, an' dat was a onlucky day to begin wid. Den de acorns and de punkins wa'n't ripe yit so he nevah got nothin' to eat till Sa'day mawnin, an' he was dat

hongry by dat time dat he didn' hardly know what he's a gwine ter do nex'.

Well, suh, when dey went out Sa'day mawnin' to feed de stock an' thowed some cawn ovah de fence, dat 'ar pig eat de cawn wid his mouf an' feed it in wid his long nose so fas' dat de yother critters couldn' so much as git a tas' o' nothin'.

When de Good Lawd saw de way things was a gwine he knowed dat it wouldn' nevah do. So he retch ovah de fence an' pick up de pig by the middle o' de back an' laid him on a block an' tuk a hatchet an' chopped his long nose squah off close up to his



An' dat's how his nose come to be squah across de een', an' tain't like nobody else's nose.

mouf. Den he turn him loose an' tole him he gotter root for his livin' de res' o' his life. An' dat's how his nose come to be squah across de een', an' 'tain't like nobody else's nose.

But if you evah had yo' nose cut off you know it hurts mighty bad, an' when Mr. Pig begin to root wid dat squah nose o' his'n it hurt so he's obleege to grunt, an' he's been a gruntin' evah sense. An'

eve'y time you scratch Mr. Pig on de back it remin's him o' de time when he had a long nose to scratch his own back, an' he didn't hev to work so hard to git a livin', an' dat makes him grunt some mo'. But de pig he ain't nevah quit a bein' greedy.

IX

WHY THE CRAWFISH GOES BACKWARD

WHEN yo' min' what a lot o' work de Good Lawd had 'fo he could git all de critters made an' to git 'em named an' larnt how to do things all 'fo Sa'day night, an' nobody to help him right 'cep'n de Angel Gabriel, it ain't no wondah dat dey was mo' o' less trouble. He couldn' put no 'pendence on Ole Nick to do nothin' right, fo' he done foun' out long ago dat he wuz one o' dese yere triflin' kin' what's allus a gittin' inter trouble hisself an' a pullin' somebody else in atter him.

An' Mr. Crawfish he come in fo' some o' de trouble right along dere, an' what's mo', he ain't nevah got ovah it yit, an' I 'spicion he ain't nevah gwine ter.

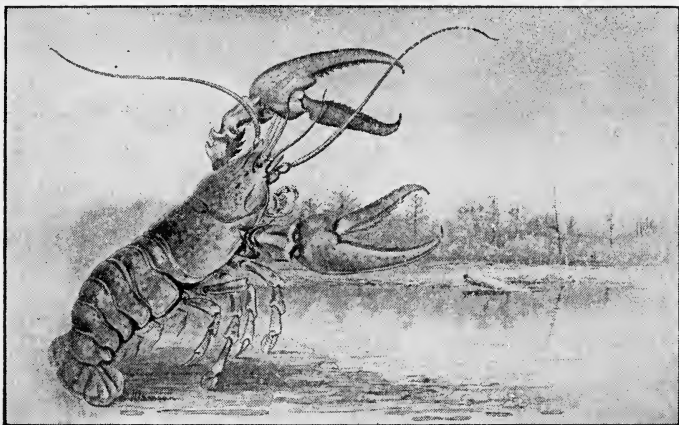
Yo' see it was dis-a-way: when de Good Lawd was a makin' de crawfish Ole Nick up and axed him a question jes' as he was a stickin' on de crawfish's

laigs. He was sorter pestered at de time, he was, an' he didn't notice jis' how many laigs he done give de crawfish. But he put him ovah de fence so he could git down to de spring branch, an' went on about his work 'ithout thinkin' no mo' about it, 'cause he was mighty busy right along dere about dat time.

Bimeby Ole Nick come along an' say he nevah seed sich a queer kind of a critter as dat ar crawfish; an' de Good Lawd ax him what de mattah wid de crawfish; an' Ole Nick he up an' say dat all de othah critters got eitha one laig on a side or two laigs on a side or three laigs on a side, but dis here crawfish got five laigs on a side; an' he wondah what in de roun' worl' he's a gwine to do wid 'em all. Den he Good Lawd he tole Ole Nick to go down to de spring branch an' fetch de crawfish back so's he could fix up his laigs de way dey oughter be.

Well, suh, Ole Nick he went down to de spring branch whar de crawfish was a pokin' his claws under de rocks an' feelin' aroun' for sump'n to eat, an' he tole de crawfish to come on outn' da, dat he had odahs to fotch him back fo' to have some of dem 'ar claws o' his'n pulled off' cause he had mo' dan he need. Mr. Crawfish he tole Ole Nick to go on

about his own business, an' not come a pesterin' roun' dar 'cause he was mighty busy a tryin' to make out a breakfus' an' a fixin' up a gittin' ready to go to housekeepin'. Den Ole Nick he tole him if he didn' come on out o' dat, he'd hatter ketch him



De crawfish backs off an' says in de crawfish language: You g'way f'm heah! I needs all de claws I got!

an' ca'y him back. Dey had a lot mo' words back an' fort, an' it eended up wid Ole Nick a tryin' to ketch de crawfish, an' de crawfish he helt up his claws, he did, so's to bite him, an' he backed off a tryin' to git away fum him, an' he holler out at him:

“You g'way f'm yer! you g'way f'm yer, you

triflin' black rascal! I needs all de claws I got!"

Well, suh, dat make Ole Nick mad an' he chase de crawfish up an' down de spring branch till de watah was all muddy an' he couldn' see him no mo' an' all de time de crawfish kep' a watchin' Ole Nick an' a backin away fum him. Bimeby Ole Nick got mighty mad, he did, an' call out to de crawfish:

"All right den you kin jes' keep on a backin'."

An' evah sense dat time whenever de crawfish sees anybody a lookin' fur him he lifts up his claws an' backs off an' says in de crawfish language: "You g'way f'm heah! g'way f'm heah! I needs all de claws I got!"

X

WHY RED PEPPER IS SO HOT

I DUN tole ye about de time dat Ole Nick bored a hole thu' de wall wid de eend o' his tail, an' 'suade de snake to stick his head in it. Well, suh, borin' dat 'ar hole mek a lot o' trouble atterwards, sho's yo' bawn, honey. An' de hotness o' red peppah's one o' de leas' o' dem ah troubles.

When de Good Lawd mek all de trees an' de flowahs an' de gyarden truck, it was a Wednesday, an' some uv 'em was sorter scattered aroun' in de woods like, an' some uv de bes' uv 'em, lak de water-million, de sweet 'taters, an' de pu'simmons, dey wuz planted in de gyarden o' Eden. An' along wid 'em was a whole lot mo' lak cabbages, an' greens, an' string beans, an' tomatuses, an' perturnips, an' goobers.

Well, suh, one o' dese here new kin's o' gyarden truck dat atterwards turn out to be de red peppah, was planted close up to de wall, an' it was jis a

stahtin' to grow propah when Ole Nick bohed dat 'ar hole thu' de wall an' got into de confab wid de snake. An' when he was a boh'n away at de hole you erembah dat de wall was so haa'd dat he woh a whole inch offen de eend o' his tail. Well, suh, dey was some o' dat dus' from de eend o' his tail fell down on de groun' an' got on de roots an' de leaves o' de young peppah.

An' when de fruit o' dat bush got ripe it turn as red as fiah, an' if you eat it, it jis bu'n yo' mouf like fiah too, an' it's been hot evah sense.

XI

WHY THE SNAIL IS SO SLOW

WELL, suh, when de Good Lawd made de snail he didn' put no bones in him, an' de snail was afraid he wa'n't a gwine ter be a crittah at all, but jes' sort of soft like a



He could come to de do' when de weather was wa'am an' set dar an' smoke his pipe.

squash or a ripe cucumber. But de Good Lawd tole him to nevah min' 'bout de bones 'cause he's gwine ter make him a nice painted bone house an' stick it on his back so's dat he could ca'y it roun wid 'im, an' whenever an' wherevah he stop, dah he was right at home, an' he could go inside an' take a

nap or have a res' an' a chaw o' terbacker any time he want to, er he could come to de do' when de weather was wa'am an' set dar an' smoke his pipe.

Den de Good Lawd make a nice house dat was jes' big enough for de snail, an' he tole de snail to stan' pufeckly still while he was a stickin' it on, an' when he got it put on, he tole Mr. Snail he'd bettah be mighty keerful o' dat house, 'cause it hatter las' him all his life, an' if de house got damaged or leaky or got any cracks in it, dey wa'n't no way to mend it 'cep'n to mend it on de inside, an' he'd be sho' to ketch dis death of cole or pneumony, an' dat 'ud be de eend of Mr. Snail.

Well, suh, de snail, he was a mighty keerful pusson, an' he made up his min' dat he hatter be mighty keerful wid dat 'ar house o' his'n. So he walk roun' jes' as slow as he kin so's not to jolt de furnicher nor break de winders nor knock de dishes offen de shelves nor to mix up de pots an' kittles in de kitchen. An' besides bein' so keerful he's got a sort of axle-grease dat he smears on de groun' whar he's a pokin' along, so's he kin slip along 'ithout joltin'.

An' down to dis day ev'y time you see Mr. Snail out fer a walk he's a movin' his house roun' wid him,

an' he's a examin'in' de road ahead an' a greasin' it so's not to jolt ovah de rough groun', an' you nevah



He's ginally a little late a gittin' to whar he's a gwine, but he's allus got his house wid him, an' it's all in ordah.

hear him a bumpin' de house or a spillin' things ovah inside. He's ginally a little late a gittin' to whar he's a gwine, but when he does git dar he's allus got his house wid him an' it's all in ordah.¹

¹ Another version is that the Good Lord put the snail's house on his back because he was so slow that he never could get home unless he kept his house with him.

XII

WHY THE POLECAT SMELLS SO

YOU done took notice dat good looks ain't de main thing in dis worl'. If it was, de polecat wouldn't haf to live so much by hisself. An' another thing is dat de rale quality is mighty keerful not to use much perfumery.

Right away back dere in de beginnin' de polecat was jes' like de yothah critters, an' what's mo', he was mighty handsome too. But befo' he'd been a whole week in de worl' he want to go out a cotin' Miss Polecat. So he fix hisself up mighty fine an' comb out his fur, an' parted his haiah in de middle, an' curl his mustache, an' he put a white hankacher in his coat pocket, an' he feel mighty biggity. Jes' den Ole Nick he drop in an' pass de time o' day wid de polecat, an' ax him fo' a drink o' watah an' a fresh chaw o' tobacker. An' when he notice dat de polecat was fixed up so fine, de white hankacher a stickin' out'n his pocket remin' him o' sump'n, an'

he ups an' says to de polecat sort o' keerless like, sezee:

"Hit look like you's a gwine somewheres."

An' de polecat he 'low, "Yas, suh, I'se a gwine aroun' to pay my 'spects to Miss Polecat a few min-



He fix hisself up mighty fine an'
he feel mighty biggity.

its; but dey ain't no hurry, 'cause it ain't so very fuh, an' I didn' 'spect to get da fo' dark no how."

An' Ole Nick he says dat Miss Polecat's a mighty fine lookin' woman an' a pusson dat stay at home lak a woman otter, an' dat he happen to know dat she's

pow'ful fon o' perfumery. Wid dat de polecat ax Ole Nick what kine she lak, an' whar he kin git some. An' Ole Nick he respon' dat he had some hisself dat he was sho' would jes' suit Miss Polecat, an' he tole Mr. Polecat if he'd drap in when he was a passin' he'd see if he couldn' manage to spah him a little to go on his white hankacher. So dey fix it up dat a'way, an' Mr. Polecat stopped at Ole Nick's cabin fur de perfumery as he's gwine along, an' Ole Nick give him a bottle an' tole him to tek it on down de road a piece 'fo' he pour it on his hankacher so's he won't lose de good uv it. Wid dat de polecat took de bottle an' went on down de big road, an' when he was a gwine th'ough de woods he pour de whole bottle full o' truck on his white hankacher. At fus' it almos' knock his head clean off, but he mek up his min' dat if Miss Polecat like it, he's a gwine to put up wid it, wheddah o' no.

So he jes' hel' his nose a while till he got sorter use to it, an' den he went on to whar he's a gwine. But he tuk notice dat whenever he meet any of his neighbors dey turn out'n de road an' run away frum him as hard as dey kin run, a holdin' dey noses. An' de only one dat didn' run away was Miss Polecat. At firs' de perfumery give her a headache

mighty bad, but she preten' she like it, an' bimeby she git use to it, an' her an' Mr. Polecat got married, an' all dey chillen like dat perfumery down to dis day.

De polecat family is a mighty han'some lot o' folks an' dey allus dresses well, but fo' all dat dey neighbors never lives close to 'em if dey can help it. Besides, dey's like some folks, dey ain't neva' foun' out dat dey use too much perfumery.

XIII

HOW THE CAT CAME TO HAVE NINE LIVES

EVA'BODY knows dat a cat's got nine lives, but it ain't eva'body dat knows jes' how he come by 'em. Hit was dis-a-way: an' I want you to tek notice at de staht dat when a mammy stan's by her children an' de children stan's by dey mammy, dey's a mighty ha'd lot to beat, des as sho's you's bawn.

At de staht an' up to de time o' de flood a cat didn't have but jes' one life des like de othah crittahs. But at de time o' de flood when ole Mr. Noah went aroun' to drive de crittahs into de ark he foun' a tom cat an' a pussy cat an' he give 'em a invite to git ready an' come along wid him into de ark, 'cause day's a gwine to be a powerful big rain an' a mighty big freshet. An' de tom cat he say he's all ready to go, an' de pussy cat say she's all ready 'cepn' she's got to take her kittens wid her, an' seein' as dey ain't yit got dey eyes open she's got to tote

'em all de way by de back o' de neck, an' it's gwine to tek some time 'cause dey's eight uv 'em. Den



Evabody knows dat a cat's got nine lives, but it ain't evabody dat knows jes' how he come by 'em.

ole Mr. Noah he tole 'em dat dey'd haf to leave de kittens behime, 'cause dey wa'n't allowed to tek kit-

tens wid 'em into de ark. An' de pussy cat she low dat if dat was de case dey'd hafter 'scuse her, 'cause she couldn' leave dem children widout any ma nohow, an' if Mr. Noah would jes tek a look at 'em he'd see dat dey was jes' de fines' lot o' kittens dat he evah sot his eyes on, an' he'd feel obleege to tek 'em along. But Mr. Noah respon' dat de boat didn' belong to him, an' dat he was a actin' undah ordahs, an' de ordahs say dat dey wa'n't allowed to have mo'n two cats on de boat. Den de pussy cat she 'splain dat dese was jes kittens, an' if de ordahs didn't say nothin' about kittens o' co'se —. An' dar Mr. Noah stopped her an' tole her she'd hev to 'scuse him 'cause he was mighty busy an' dey wa'n't no time to lose, an' wid dat he hobble off down de big road a lookin' fo' de othah crittahs an' a tellin' 'em what to do, an' a growlin' 'cause de women folks all want to argy an' splain so much.

Well, suh, dat pussy cat she mek up her min' dat she's a gwine ter git dem kittens on bode wheder o' no; an' she say dat it didn't hole to reason dat anybody could be so low down triflin' dat he'd want to drown such a fine lot o' kittens, an' dat too when dey didn' so much as have dey eyes open.

Wid dat she pick up one of 'em by de back o' de neck an' ca'y it up close to whar de ark was a standin', an' da she put it down on de groun' by de gangplank, an' tole de 'Tom cat to stay dar an' min' it while she go back atter de othahs. An' she kep' on a fetchin' 'em ontil she had all eight uv 'em da in one pile.

By dat time de crittahs was all a marchin' into de ark two by two, wid de big ones in de front an' de little ones behime accordin' to dey size, an' when it come time fo' de cats to march in de pussy cat pick up one o' de kittens by de back o' de neck an' stahted up de gangplank alongside o' de 'Tom cat, a meanin' to git a pass an' come back atter de othah ones. But jes' when she come up to de big front do' whar dey all hatter go in, ole Mr. Noah was a stan-in' da a takin' de tickets, an' he say:

"Looky heah, Miss Cat, you'll hatter leave dat 'ar kitten outside; I done tole you dat once befo'."

Well, suh, dat cat she want to argy de mattah, an' she begin to talk so fas' dat Mr. Noah ain't have a chance to say nothin', so he jes' call call out:

"Don't block up de road dar!" an' wid dat he shove de pussy cat an' her kitten offen de gangplank, an' de 'Tom cat he hatter go in by hisself 'cause de othah crittahs was a crowdin' up behime.

Well, suh, de pussy cat 'low dat she ain't a gwine to be beat out dat-a-way, but by de time she git back whar she lef' de kittens, all de crittahs o' her size was done gone in an' it look like she's gwine to be lef' outn de ark sho' nough.

An t'wan't long befo' de rain commence to rain and de big watahs begin to come up ontill de cat an' de kittens was lef a swimmin' aroun' de ark a meowin' an' a try-in' to fin' a place whar dey could climb up an' git inside.

When de pussy cat tuk notice dat one o' de kittens couldn' hol' out no longah she tuk it in her mouf, an' when de kitten die, its life went down inside o' de ole cat. Den when another was about to drown she drap de dead one an' she took



Ole Mr. Noah retch out his arm
thu' a hole an' pull up de pussy
cat.

dat one up, an' when it die its life went down inside o' de ole cat too. An' dat went on ontill de kittens was all dade, all de whole eight ov 'em, an' de eight lives was all inside o' dey mammy.

Den de ole cat begin to meow, an' she make sich a moanful soun' dat ole Mr. Noah retch out his arm thu' a hole an' pull up de pussy cat, 'cause he remembah dat dey wa'n't no cat on bode 'cep'n' de Tom cat, an' he wa'n't no 'count nohow.

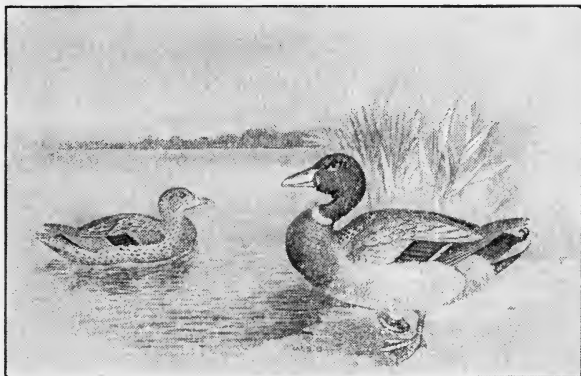
An' aftah de flood was all ovah an' de crittahs all come outen de ark, all de cats dat was bawn from dat time on had nine lives in 'em, ste'd o' jes one like dey stahted with.

An' dat's what mek me say dat when a mammy stick by her childen an' de childen stick by dey mammy, dey's mighty sho' to win in de long run.

XIV

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DUCK

YO' done tuk notice dat de duck ain't like de othah birds; his neck's too long, an' his laigs is too short; his bill's all flat, an' long an' out o' shape, an' his feet's got de toes all growd



De duck's laigs is too short, an' his feet's got de toes all growed together like a fan, an' he talks thu' his nose.

together like a fan, an' when he tries to talk he talks thu' his nose. Well, suh, dat all come along

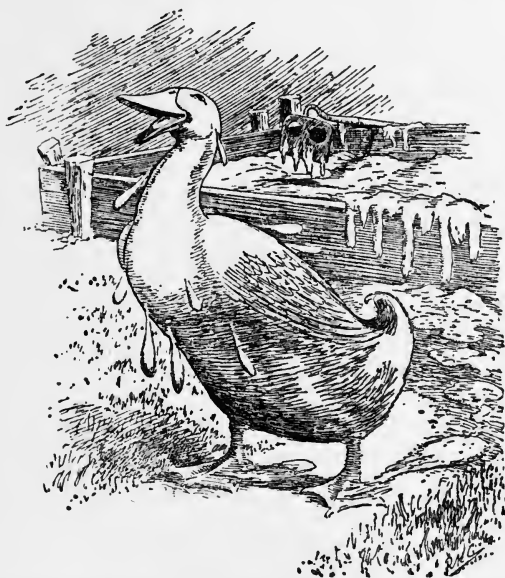
o' de trouble he got into de week when de worl' was fus' made.

It was a Friday dat de Good Lawd made all de birds, an' dat was de day he created de duck along wid de res' of 'em. An' dey was all made out'n de same mixin' dat de Angel Gabriel fix up da' on de groun' whar it was handy to de watah. I done tole you how de Good Lawd made all de crittahs an' stood 'em up to dry befo' he blowed de bref o' life into 'em.

Well, suh, it was gittin' long to'ds sundown an' de day's work was mos' done an' de Good Lawd was a gittin mighty tired when he made de duck. An' when he got him finished it was like de othah birds wid a bill an' feet like a chicken, an' a short neck, an' long laigs. But jist when he was a puttin' de finishin' touches on him an' he was a curlin' up a little bunch o' feathers on top o' his tail, de duck slip out'n his han's an' fell into de mortah dat de Angel Gabriel was a mixin'.

De duck he lan' on his feet right spang in de mortah, an' squushed his laigs down so dey wa'n't mo' dan half as long as dey was befo', but de Good Lawd he retch over an' pick him up by de bill, an' dat stretch his neck out an' mek his bill long an' flat an'

de batter got stuck betwixt his toes. He sho' was pow'ful out o' shape, but it was so late dat de Good Lawd didn' have time to mek him over befo' dark, so he jes blowed de bref o' life into him jes' as he was



His nose was so flat an' stopped up dat he jes' said "quank."

an' put him down on de groun'. De Duck tried to say "thank 'e," but his nose was so flat an' stopped up dat he jes' said "quank." An' dat's de way he's been a talkin' thu' his nose eve' sense.

WHY THE CRANE IS SO LONG

IT do look sometimes like de Good Lawd was a bunglin' things up a good deal, but he mos' giner'ly fixes 'em up so dey comes out right in de long-run.

You des ax de crane, honey, an' he'll tell you he don't know how he's a gwine to keep house widout dem long laigs an' long neck o' his'n, do' dey did look mighty queer along at de fust.

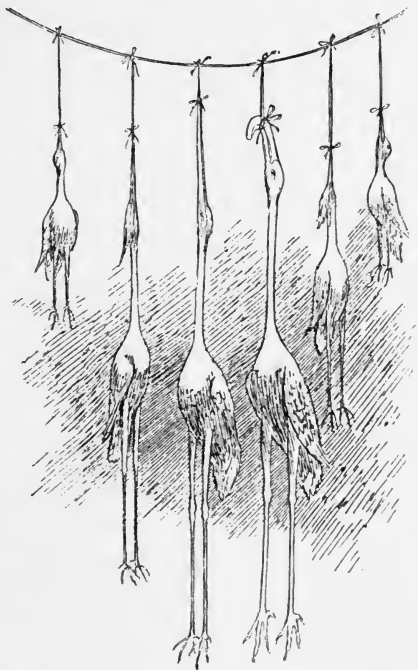


An' de crane 'll tell you he don't know how he's gwine to keep house widout dem long laigs an' long neck o' his'n.

It was on de Friday o' dat fus' week when de Good Lawd mek de worl'. Dat was de day he laid off to create de fishes an' de birds. An' de firs' 'bird he mek was de crane. But atter he done got him all made 'sted'er settin' de crane down on de groun' fer to dry, he hung him up by de eend o' de bill, an' went on a makin' de shite-poke,

an' de kill-dee, an' de snipe an' a lot o' othah birds;
an' a hangin' 'em up in de same way.

Well, suh, atter
he done got a lot ov
'em hung up, de
Angel Gabriel tuk
notice dat all o' dem
birds was a stretch-
in' out mighty long,
an' de longer dey
hang dar, de longer
dey got. So he up
an' ax de Good
Lawd if de mortah
he was makin' 'em
out ov, wasn't a lee-
tle too saft. But
de Good Lawd he
tuk de birds down,
an' 'stead o' makin'
'em all over, he jes'
blowed de bref o'



All o' dem birds was a stretchin' out
mighty long, an' de longer dey hang dar,
de longer dey got.

life into 'em an' let 'em go, an' tole 'em to go long
an' git out'n de way. Atter dat he set de othah
birds down on de groun' to dry, but all o' dem fust

ones got long laigs an' long necks, an' long bills 'cause de mortah was saft when de Good Lawd hung 'em up to dry.

But dese yer long legged birds ain't much han's at swimmin' nohow, an' dey done got so used to dey long laigs dat dey don't know what dey's gwine ter do widout 'em, mo' specially when it come to wadin' in de watah, an' a fishin' in de holes.

An' dat's what mek me say what I do: ye kin gin'ly depen' on de Good Lawd, honey. He's sorter slow sometimes, but he's mighty sho'; an' he's ap' to look atter things in de long run.



De Good Lawd's ap' to
look atter things in de
long run.

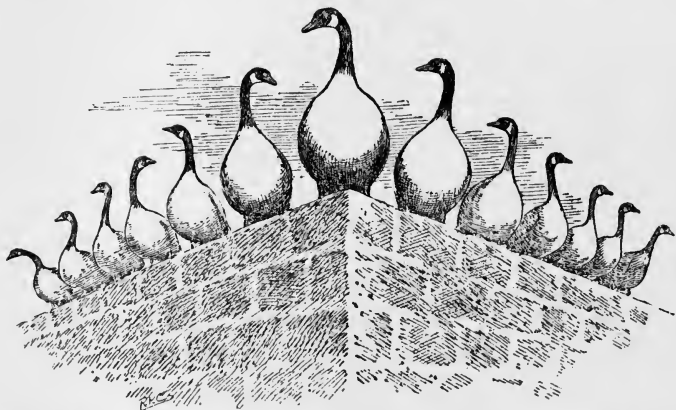
XVI

WHY THE WILD GEESE FLY THAT WAY

DE way yo' start in dis worl' is de way yo's gwine to keep a goin', honey. Dat's de way it was wid de wild geese, an' it's pooty much de same wid all de othah critters.

Dat Friday when de Good Lawd create de fishes an' de birds all de handy room was a gittin' mighty crowded wid de diff'ent kin's o' critters, an' he had to be mighty keerful not to step on some ov' 'em. Along about de time he was ready to create de geese, he was a workin' down da' close to de north corner o' de Gyarden o' Eden whar dey was a high wall made out 'o' rocks. De Good Lawd he done had de 'speriunce o' de cranes an' de othah long legged birds, so he was a settin' de birds down on de groun' to dry as fas' as he mek 'em. When he mek de geese he look aroun' fo' a place to put 'em down, an' when he didn't see no room handy on de groun', he jes' set 'em all up on de top o' de rock

wall da' at de corner. De one right on de corner he was a great big gander, an' all de other ones was on both sides ov him. An' when de Good Lawd got ready to blow de bref.o' life into 'em he was sorter tired, an' had de back ache, so he retch down an' took 'em by de bill, an' pull dey necks



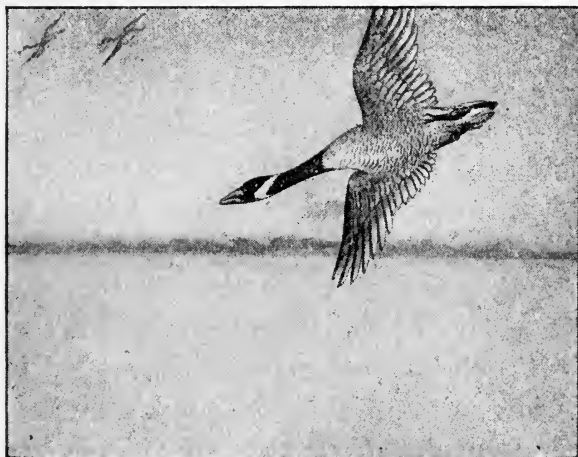
When he didn't see no room handy on de groun' he jes' set 'em up on top o' de rock wall da' at de corner.

out sorter long so's he could blow de bref o' life in 'em widout stoopin' ovah. He lef 'em wid dey haid pinted de same way, an' den he tole 'em to fly away to de norf whar dey was a big pon' o' watah. An' when dey rose in de air de big gander said "Honk!" 'cause he was in de lead, an' dey all

flew away 'todes de norf a lookin' fer a place to build dey nests.

An' evah sense dat time when de wild geese fly away to de norf de old gander is always in de front a sayin' "honk!" an' de othah ones come behime jes' lak dey was a standin' on de corner o' de wall o' de Gyarden o' Eden dat first Friday when de worl' was made.

An' dat's what mek me say yo' bettah git started right in dis worl', fo' de way yo' start is de way yo's gwine to keep a gwine.



De way yo' start in dis worl' is de way yo's gwine
to keep a gwine.

XVII

HOW THE TURTLE CAME BY A SHELL

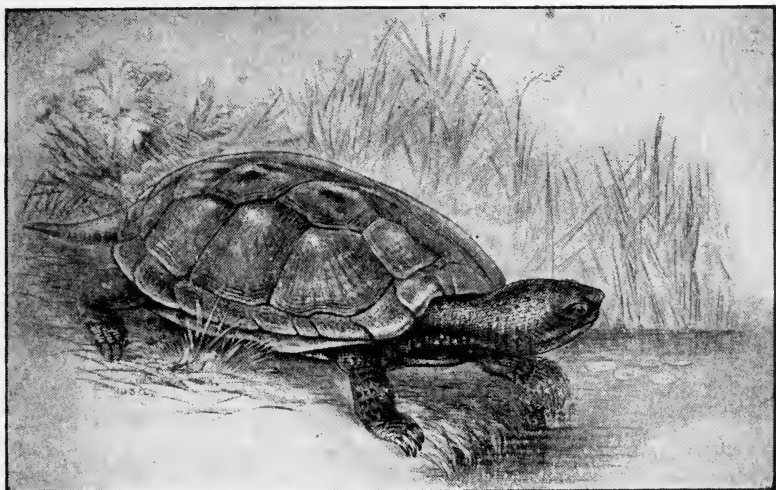
Beauty's only skin deep,
Ugly's to de bone;
Beauty soon fades away;
Ugly hol's its own.

ANOTHER thing is dat fiah's a mighty good thing to keep ye warm in cold weather an' to cook wif, but yo' mustn' never play wid it, an' ye hatter be mighty keerful to not let it git de staht o' ye; for if ye do, it's fare-ye-well, my own true love! Playin' wid de fiah was what spile de good looks o' Mr. Turkle an' o' all his folks.

Yes sah, you done tuk notice dat de turkle ain't han'some lak de yothah critters; he ain't got no haiah lak mos' ov 'em, an' he ain't got but mighty little hide, an' some o' his fambly kin go inside an' shet de front do' an' de back do' an' you can't see neither dey huids ner dey tails. But dey wa'n't allus dat-a-away. Dey use' to be a good lookin'

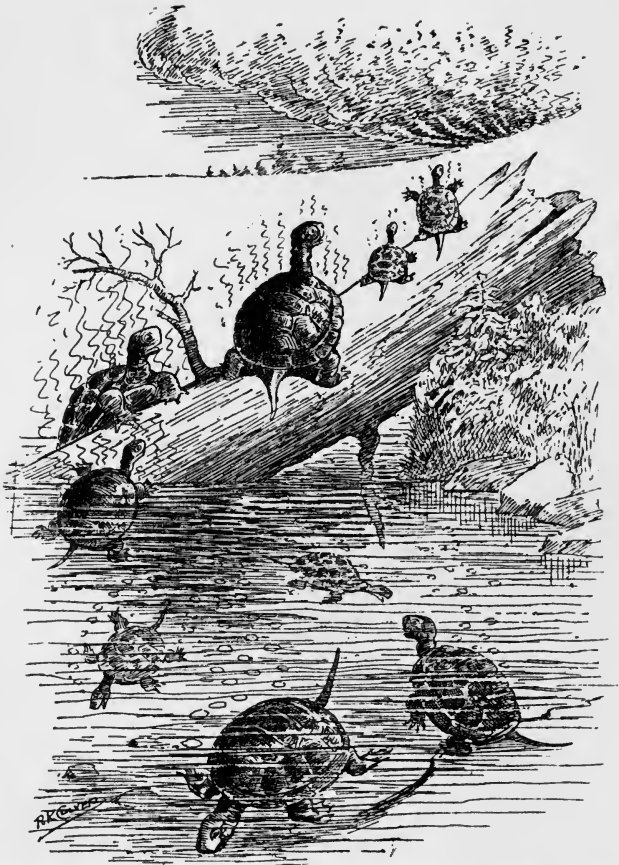
fambly, an' hit all come about along o' de 'speriunce an' troubles dat de ole time turkles got into in de early days a playin' wid fiah.

In dem times de turkles had sof' skin an' haiah all ovah 'em des lak de yothah crittahs. An' dey



De turkle ain't han'some.

was mighty fon' o' wheat an' dey use' ter go on picnics to de wheat fiel's an' pull down de wheat an' eat it. But one day de turkle fambly got into a wheat fiel' dat mek 'em trouble all de res' o' dey lives. Dey was all in dere a eatin' de wheat, but



Dey all crope to de creek an' got in de watah to suage de pain.

dey done lef' two o' de children by de picnic fiah, an' dey done tole 'em to keep de dawgs away from de kitchin things, an' to *be sho' an not play in de fiah*. Well, sah, putty soon dem children forgit all about not playin' in de fiah, an' dey begin to make red ribbons wid de chunks, an' de fus' thing yo' know de fiah cotch de wheat an' de win' blowed it all over de whole fiel'.

Wel, suh, dem 'ar turkles nevah was much of a fambly fur runnin', but dey natchelly lit out o' dar when dey seed de fiah a comin' to'ds 'em. But 'twan't no use; de fiah cotch up wid 'em an' dey all got ev'y bit o' de haiah scorched off'n 'em, an' dey hides was so buhnt an' swunk up dat dey was all out o' shape an' dere eyes was all blood-shot. An' mo'n dat de fiah was so hot an' hurted 'em so dat dey all crope to de creek an' got into de watah to suage de pain. An' when dey done dat de bubbles come to de top an' de watah jes' sizzled an' mek dey hides hahd lak a piece o' hot iron when de blacksmith put it in de watah. An' eva sense dat time de turkles has all stayed in de watah or mighty close to it whar dey can drop in an' git out'n de way if any trouble comes along. They hides has allus stayed swunk up an' hahd, an' to dis day

wheneva Mr. Turkle jumps in de watah de bubbles comes to de top.

An' dat's what meks me tell ye, honey, dat if you want to grow up han'sum, don't ye nebber play wid fiah.

XVIII

WHY THE GUINEA FOWL SAYS “POT-RACK”

I TELL you what it is, honey, dey ain't no good ever come o' talkin' too much. Talkin' sho' does mek a mighty lot o' trouble in dis worl'. An' I 'spec dat's de reason mos' o' de wise birds done quit de practice long time ago. Another thing is dat explainin' mistakes don't help nothin'.

Way back dar in de good ole times mos' all de crittahs talked jes' lak de othah folks, but along o' one reason or another dey's mos' all ov 'em done los' de nack ov it, o' else deys' jis' got a few words lef'. Da's de rooster; he used to be a mighty big talker, he did, but now all he kin say is jis' "Doctor Davey Doe." De frawgs used to be pow'ful han's to talk, but dey tuk to drinkin' an' now dey nevah say nothin' hardly 'cep'n "Jug o' rum!" De pa'tridge done forgit all he used to say 'cep'n "Bob White!" an' all de whip-poor-will's got lef' is "Twixt hell an' de white oak!" An' de Guinea fowl she used



De frawgs tuk to drinkin', an' now dey nevah say nothin' hardly
'cep'n "jug o' rum!"

to be de bigges' talker o' de whole lot, but she's lak a good many othah folks you run across in dis worl', dey come a time when she talk too much, an' right dar is whar her trouble commence, an' she's been a



De pa'tridge done forgit all he used to say
'cep'n "Bob White!"

'splainin' her "pot-rack" ever sence. For dat's de only word she's got lef'.

It happen som'n lak dis:

Yo' min' dat Mr. Lot use' to live in de city o' Sodom. An' Sodom was a fine city in dem days

des as sho's yo's bawn. Ole Mr. Lot was a mighty strick memba o' de church too, but de congregation kep' a droppin' off, an' a droppin' off, ontill he had to take all de cull'd folks to meetin' so's to fill up de amen corners. Ole Miss Lot she was de presiden' o' de women's club an' a memba o' de Daughters of de Revolushum an' o' de Missionary Sassiety an' a whole lot o' sich things, an' she didn' hev much time to go to prayer meetin' no mo'. Well, suh, long about dat time de people got mighty interested in dancin' an' pic-nics, an' boby cues, an' mos' ev'ything 'cep'n gwine to prayer meetin' an' to preachin', an' de Good Lawd made up his min' dat he's a gwine ter plow 'em all undah an' plant a new crop. But seein' dat Mr. Lot'd been a holdin' up his eend putty well, he 'low he'd give him an' his fambly a chance to move out befo' he begin de operations. So he tole ole Mr. Lot to pack up an' move out, an' not to lose any time about it, eitha, 'cause he's gittin' mighty mad. An' another thing he tole him was dat dey musn't nobody look back atter dey started out at de big front gate, 'cause if dey did, it would be a sign o' bad luck.

Well, suh, dey biled a ham an' made a loaf o' light bread, an' tuk some hard biled aigs, an' de

tin coffee pot an' a little sugar an' coffee, an' a bottle o' molasses, an' dey put 'em into some baskets along wid de Guinea fowl, an' early nex' mawnin' dey loaded 'em all on a donkey named Potiphar, an' started. Mr. Lot he was a walkin' in front a car-

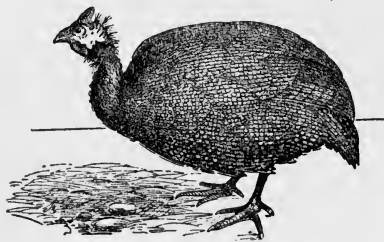


Mr. Lot was a walkin' in front, an' de nex' one was one o' de dark-
eys named Dan a leadin' Potiphar, an' ole Miss Lot she was a walkin'
along behin' wid a umbrel' fer to keep off de sun.

ryin' his shot gun on his shoulder, an' his dog Ring was a trottin' a little ahead a lookin' fer rabbits; an' de nex' one was one o' de darkeys named Dan a leadin' Potiphar, an' ole Miss Lot she was a walkin' along behin' wid a umbrel' fer to keep off de

sun, an' den come de res' o' de culled folks a carryin' some o' de little children.

Ole Potiphar he was a mighty onery dunkey, an' dey call him Pot fo' short. Sometimes he'd poke along an' pull back on de halter, an' den Dan got behin' him an' lam him wid a club. Ole Potiphar he knowed how to rack an' to trot, but when Dan beat him wid de club sometimes he'd rack along a little piece an' den he'd begin to poke agin. One o' de times when Dan was a-maulin' him he started to trot, an' he trot so hard dat he mbs' jolt de Guinea fowl to death, an' de Guinea fowl stuck her head outn' de basket an' call out jes' as loud as she can holler "Pot, rack! Pot, rack!"



But de Guinea fowl feel mighty bad, an' she look mighty skeered, an' she ain't been able to say nothin' from dat day to dis, but jis' "pot-rack."

Ole Miss Lot she heard de Guinea fowl an' she thought she said "Look back, look back," so she turn roun' to look back, an' she was turn to a big pillar full o' salt.

Well, suh, nobody knows what a lot o' trouble dat make. But it was too late; de bad luck was

done come. Mr. Lot want to kill de Guinea fowl, but de Guinea fowl feel mighty bad, an' she looked mighty skeered, an' 'splain dat all she say was jes' "Pot, rack," an' she kep' on atter dat a tryin' to 'splain, till she ain't been able to say nothin' else from dat day to dis but jis' "pot-rack."

An' dat's what mek me say dey ain't no use a wastin' yo time a 'splainin' yo' mistakes; it don't help nothin', an' it don't do no good. De bes' way is not to make 'em.

XIX

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DOGOSHES

I TELL you what, honey, good mannaahs 'll git you lots funder in dis worl' dan good looks. An' if you want to have good mannaahs, you got to listen to dem what knows what good mannaahs is. But den some folks don't want to hear no 'dvice f'om nobody. An' ye kin mos' gin'ly be mighty sho' dat kin' o' folks is a gwine to lan' right spang in de middle o' trouble soonah o' latah. Da was de dogoshes, as nice critters as ever was to look at, but dey des natcherly had bad mannaahs, an' dey wouldn't tek de advise o' dem dat knowed what was right. An' dat's how it come dat dey ain't no dogoshes in de worl' no mo'. Dey wahn't fitten to live, 'cause dey wouldn' listen to nobody.

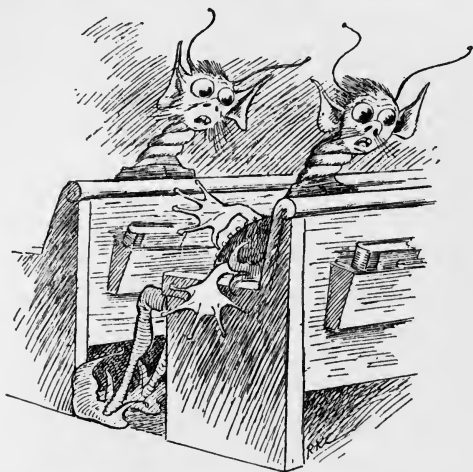
De dogoshes was created by de Good Lawd des like de res' o' de critters, an' on Sunday mawnin' dey all went to meetin' along o' de other folks. An' de preacher done tole 'em how dey got to behave

deyselves at church, how dey got to stan' up when dey sing, an' how dey got to git down on dey knees when dey pray, an' how dey mustn't talk or fool endurin' o' de sermon an' how dey got to put som'n' besides tin buttons in de contribushum box when it was pass aroun', an' how dey must be sho' to not look roun' every time somebody come in de church, 'cause dat was mighty bad mannaahs.

Well, suh, de dogoshes didn' feel ve'y well acquainted wid de other critters cos' dey was jus' created yistiday as ye might say, an' dey ain't had much time to visit aroun' an' to get better acquainted wid dey neighbors. So dey was pow'ful cu'ious bout wheddar de critters had feathers o' scales o' hair o' jus' nothin' at all. When dey got in de church dey feel like dey des nachelly *got* to look aroun' whenever dey hear somebody a walkin' up de aisle wid squeaky shoes on, 'cause dey want to knowd who it is, an' what dey look like, an' how dey is dressed.

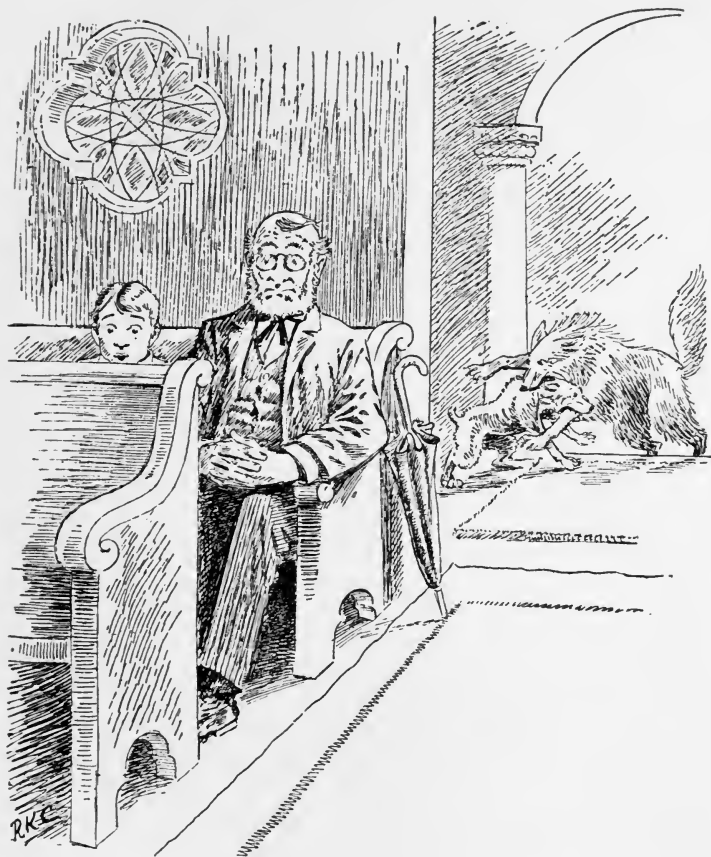
But dey was jus' one do' in de back o' de church an' de folks haf to set wid dey backs to de do', an' when anybody come in de dogoshes turn roun' dey haid an' look at 'em till dey come way up in front an' go over in de lef' han' amen corner an' sot down.

By dat time somebody else come in at de do' agin an' before dey had time to untwis' dey necks dey was a starin' at 'em an' dey'd watch 'em till dey hed passed in front an' sot down in de lef' han' amen corner too. Den it kep' on a happenin' de same



De necks o' de dogoshes was twisted 'roun'
an' 'roun' till dey jus' natchelly choked to
death.

way till de necks o' de dogoshes was twisted 'roun'
an' roun' till dey jis' natchelly choked to death.
An' when de good Lawd saw de dogoshes choked
to death 'cause dey didn' have no manna's in church,
he said he reckon he better not mek any more folks



An' de nex' time you go to meetin', honey, keep yo' eyes on de preacher, no mattah what happen behime ye.

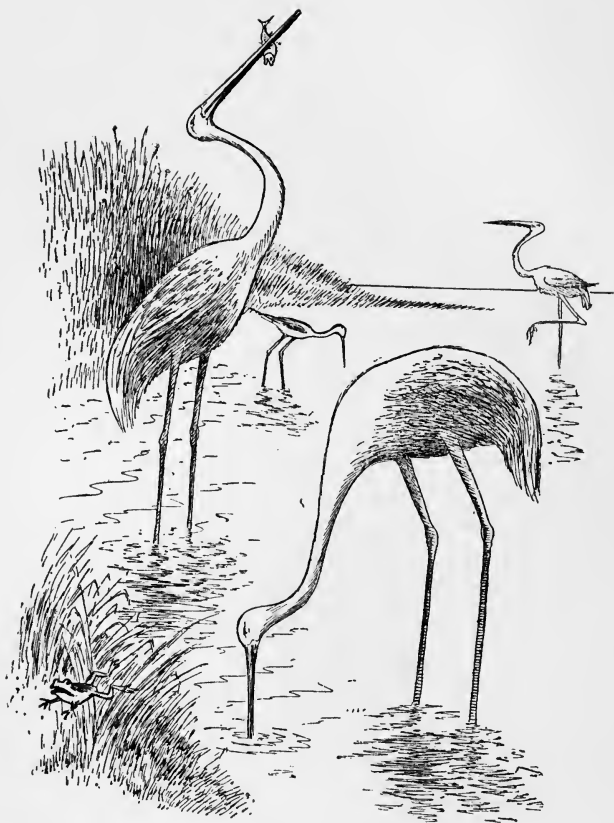
o' dat kin'. An' he never did. An' dat's de reason dey ain't no mo' dogoshes in de worl'. An' de nex' time you go to meetin', honey, keep yo' eyes on de preacher, no mattah what happen behime ye.

XX

WHY THE GOOD LORD ALLOWS THE DEVIL TO LIVE

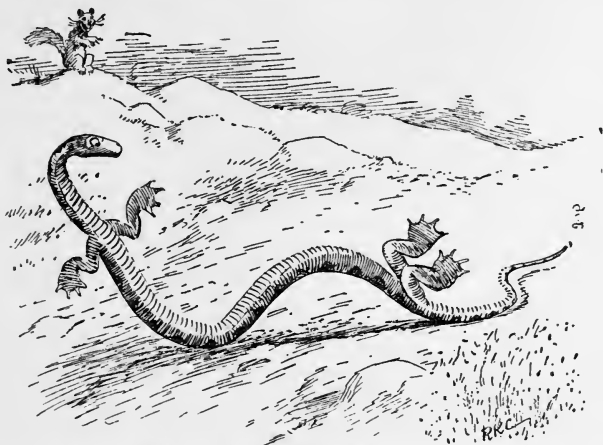
(The constant interference of the Devil, otherwise known as Old Nick, with the plans and purposes of the all-powerful Good Lord, kept ever before a child's mind the puzzling question as to why the Good Lord did not, once for all, completely do away with that common enemy. From the very beginning he appears as a meddling, tempting, upsetting, lying marplot. He lied to the snake, and destroyed his legs; he tempted the tadpoles and caused them to lose their tails; he sowed weeds in the corn fields of nights; he scraped the scales from the catfish, and by lying to Mr. Polecat led him to use a perfumery that has caused him to be feared and fled from to this day. And above all he must be guarded against day and night by every descendant of every one of the Good Lord's creatures. Nothing was more natural than to go to the root of the matter and inquire why the Good Lord allows the Devil to live.)

YES, honey, it do look dat a way sometimes. But it's des like I done tole you about de crane's long laigs:—dey turn out in de een' to be jis' de kin' o' laigs de crane wanted. An'



Dey turn out to be jis' de kin' o' laigs de crane wanted.

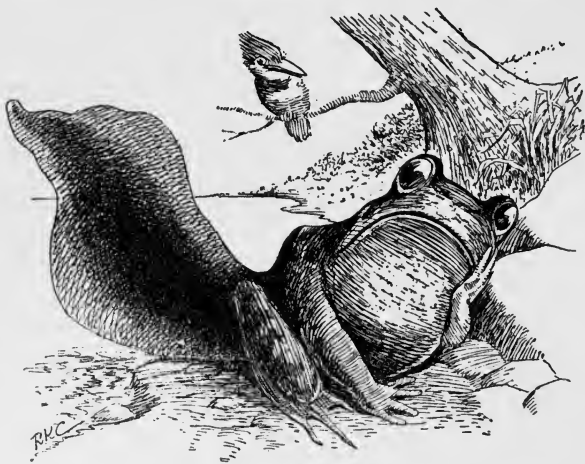
if de snake had feet right now, he wouldn't know what to do wid 'em; an' if de catfish had scales he'd be powerful mizable, an' he wouldn't know who he's akin to; an' if de frawg had a tail he wouldn't have much use fur it, an' it 'd jis' be in de way. So, atter



An' if de snake had feet right now, he wouldn't know what to do
wid 'em.

all, honey, de bes' way is to trus' de Good Lawd des lak I done tole you, 'cause he can see funder into dese here mattahs dan what de res' of us kin.

An' as for de weeds dat Ole Nick done sowed in de cawn fiel's o' nights, dey ain't so bad as what he thinks dey is. To be sho' dey do mek a lot o' work,



An' if de frawg had a tail, it'd jis be in de way.

but atter all, work is good for folks. In dese here river bottoms de crab grass, an' de cuckle burs, an' de Spanish needles, an' de ragweeds, an' de pusley,



From the very beginning!

an' de mornin' glories do grow scan'lous, but de cawn don't amount to nothin' whar de weeds won't grow. An' a choppin' 'em out do mek dat a' dinnah taste mighty good.

Dah goes de dinnah horn right now!

XXI

WHY THE RABBIT HAS LONG EARS

LA, honey, hit takes a pow'ful long time to larn good manners; an' some folks can't larn 'em even den. But some folks is jes' nachelly low down, an' dey can't holp it; leastways dey don't.

In general an' in de long run Mr. Rabbit is a gentleman, but he's mighty like some other folks we knows about:—he's got some low down streaks in him. An' you mos' gene'lly notice dat you can't pass yo'self off for a gentleman all de time onless you can keep de upper han' o' de mean streaks.

I done tole you how talkin' too much is a mighty bad business an' gits folks into lots o' trouble, but I tole you right now dat listenin' too much is worse dan talkin' too much. An' besides, hit's mighty bad manners to listen to talk dat ain't meant for you to hear; rale gentlemen an' ladies don't do it. Dat's de main pint. An' what's mo', once you larn a bad habit, specially if you larn it when you're young,

hit's mighty sho' to stick to you all de days o' your life, no matter if you live to be as old as Methusalem. Dat's de way it happened to Mr. Rabbit a long time ago: he larnt a bad habit way back at de time o' de flood when he was young, an' de habit done stuck to him down to dis day.

Hit all happened endurin' o' de time when ole Mr. Noah had all de critters in de ark, an' was a sailin' up an' down an' a lookin' mighty anxious for dry lan', an' for a place to res' de sole o' his foot; 'cause a sailor always gits tired in de sole o' his foot. Dey'd all done been in de ark forty days an' forty nights while it was a pourin' down rain, an' rations was a gittin' mighty low des as sho's you's bawn. De elephant done eat up all de hay an' de hog



De goats was de only ones dat had any chawin' tobacker lef'.

done eat up all de cawn, an' de goats was de only ones dat had any chawin' tobacker lef'! An' yo' know how folks is when dey ain't got no tobacker an' don' git enough to eat: dey des natchelly begin to quarrel an' to fin' fault, whedder dey's any sense in it or not. An' critters is des de same way.

An' dat's des what happen in de ark. De animals all begin ter grumble. O' course it was mighty hot in dar an' it smelt awful; an' besides dey didn't have enough to eat, an' dey got mighty tired o' what dey did have. De elephant he want some fresh brush-heaps to eat, an' de hog said he wanted a place whar he could root aroun' widout stickin' a nail or a splinter in his nose, an' de rabbit want some calamus root to swage his hunger. De fleas was de only ones dat was satisfied 'cause dey didn't have to go fur fur a change. An' whenever folks on a boat ain't satisfied de fus' thing you know dey all begin to plot an' plan some'n or other.

You done notice dat Mr. Rabbit's got a power o' curiosity about everything under de sun. An' on de ark he was mighty 'fraid somebody'd say some'n he didn't hear. De ole rooster couldn't say "Doctor Davey Doe" widout Mr. Rabbit askin' what he said, an' what he said it fur. When de pig grunted he

always wanted ter know what he was a gruntin' about; an' when de duck quacked he wanted to know what de duck said, an' what he said dat fur; an' every time dat de Guinea-hen said "pot-rack" he had to have it all 'splained w'hat "pot-rack" meant whedder it was any o' his business or not. An' it was de same way wid what de white folks said. It des look like he's worried so dat he's gwine to die o' dis here nervous pesteration.



De ole rooster couldn't say "Doctor Davey Doe" widout Mr. Rabbit askin' what he said, an' what he said it fur.

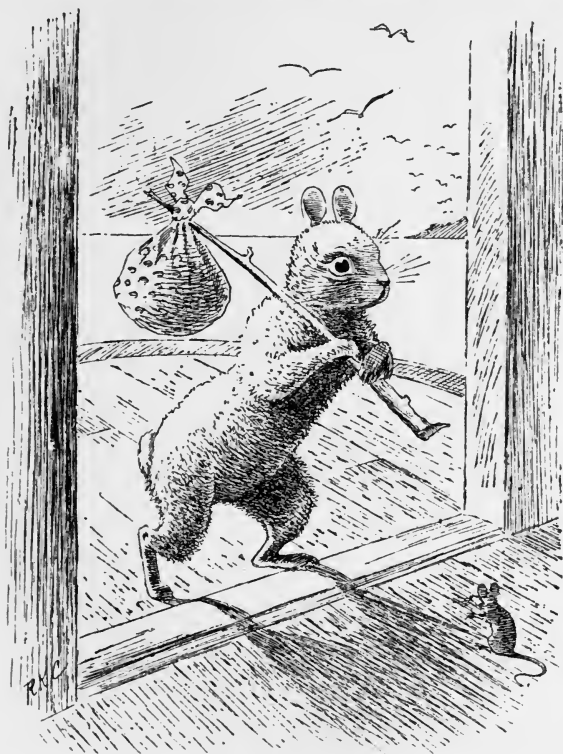
In dem days de rabbit never been in sassiety much, an' he never had much use fur watah nohow, an' dat boat, wid de watah a sloshin' aroun' on de outside, an' de watah a sloppin' aroun' on de inside, an' de watah a leakin' th'ough de roof an' a leakin' th'ough de bottom all make him mighty nervous.

An' whenever Mr. Rabbit hear any talk, or any



Every time he heard de boat scream, or anybody a talkin', he crope up as close as he could an' stretch out his years jes' as fur as he could.

o' dese here noises, he begin to 'spicion dey was some trouble or other, an' he was mighty anxious



When Brer Rabbit went into de ark he had pretty little years des
like a mouse.

to know what dey was all a sayin'. So every time
he heard de boat scream, or de critters make any

noise or anybody a talkin' he crope up close as he could an' stretch out his years jes' as fur as he could an' strained 'em, an' kep' on a strainin' 'em a tryin' ter hear what dey was a sayin'. An' he kep' it up, an' kep' it up endurin' o' de whole time while de waters was a dryin' up, an' clean on down to de



He strain 'em so much a listenin' to what wa'n't none o' his business, dat when he come out'n de ark he had dem long flop years.

time he was let out'n de ark. An' dat was a mighty long time des as sho's you's bawn.

When Brer Rabbit went into de ark he had pretty little years des like a mouse, but he strain 'em so much a listenin' to what wa'n't none o' his business dat when he come out'n de ark he had dem long flop years, an' he had 'em ever sense, an' all his chillens

has de same kine o' years, an' dey's always a listenin' for somep'un or nother.

An' dat bad habit o' listenin' to talk dat wan't meant for him keeps his years as long as ever. Fur dat's somep'n de rale quality don't never do.

An' if you ever want to fin' out whedder you is a rale gentleman or a rale lady, des watch yo'self an' see whedder you's a listenin' to talk dat ain't meant fur you to hear. If you don't you is; if you do, you ain't—not yit.

XXII

WHY THE BIRDS ARE OF DIFFERENT COLORS

WHATEVA you rub aginst in dis worl' some of it's a gwine to stick to you, honey. An' what's mo' when folks looks at you, dey mos' giner'ly knows whar you bin, and who you's bin a 'sociatin' wid.

Dat's de way it worked wid de birds, an' it works de same way wid de res' of us.

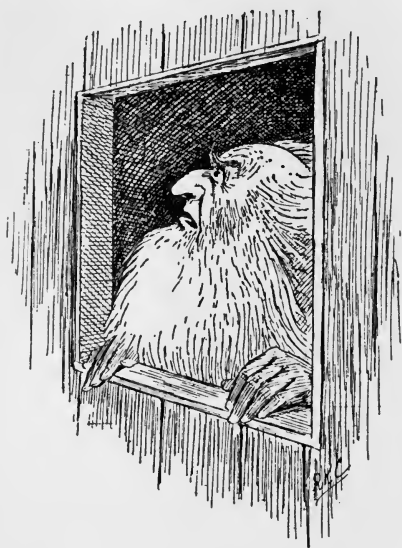
When de Good Lawd made de birds in de beginnin' he made 'em all white, and dey all been white clean up to de time o' de big flood dat drowneded all de critters 'ceptin' de ones dat ole Mr. Noah had wid him in de ark.

But, La bless you, it took a mighty sight o' water to drown everything in de whole worl', for de folks an' de critters dat wan't in de ark was a climbin' up on de fences, an' on de stumps an' on de trees an' on de hills an' on de mountains so dat de Good Lawd's obleege to have mo' water fo' to finish de

business. De rain couldn't rain fast enough, so de Good Lawd had to bust up all de clouds, an' to bust holes in de skies, an' to bust up de rivers and de ponds and de seas to git enough water. An' all dis time de lightnin' was a flashin' an' a slambangin' aroun' an' de thunder was a rollin' an' a rumblin' an' a bumpin' aroun' in de sky, an' de wilderness was a howlin' fitten to skeer everybody to death dat want' already skeered to death or drowned. But atter forty days and forty nights de water done give clean out, an' de storm's obleeged to stop cause dey wan't no more water, an' no more thunder an' lightnin' ontill de Good Lawd could fine time to make some mo'. An' den de water begin to dry up, an' it kep on a dryin' up an' a dryin' up ontill de ark scraped on de bottom an' settled down in de mud, an' da she was an' da she stayed.

Well, suh, mos' folks would a been powerful glad to git out o' dat 'ar ark, but old Cap'n Noah, he was mighty jubous about de weather. Atter all o' his troubles he didn't have no confidence in it no mo'. So he jis stick his head out thu' a hole in de side o' de ark an' pass de time o' day wid de Good Lawd, an' ax him how things was a gittin' along, and whedder it look like dey's a gwine to be any mo'

rain 'fore mawnin'. An' de Good Lawd respon' dat dey's bin a change o' de moon an' de trouble an'



Ole Cap'n Noah was mighty jubous
about de weather.

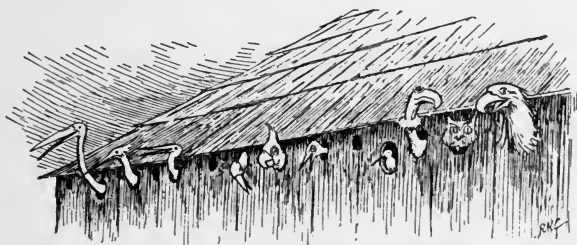
de storm was all over, an' he could open de big front do' an' put out de gangplanks an' let all de critters out, an' he could come out hissself an' res' de sole o' his foot. But ole Mr. Noah said he'd hatter 'scuse him 'cause it seem like it 'ud be safer under kiver o' de roof o' de ark in case dey was

another shower in de night, an' bein' as he's bin a livin' thar mighty nigh a year, an' bein' he's got de rumatiz powerful bad, it did seem a good deal better for him to stay inside whar it was dry dan to go out dar in all o' dat mud.

Atter a jowerin' an' a ruminatin back an' fort nearly all day a tryin' to git ole Mr. Noah to open

de do' an' come out, de Good Lawd see how de lan' lay. It seem like ole Cap'n Noah was mighty nervous about de rain and de rumpus dat come along wid it, an' he done mek up his mine he ain't a gwine to leave dat ar' ark till he git de promise o' de Good Lawd dat he won't drown 'em no mo'.

So den de Good Lawd scraped all de clouds out'n



Up in de attic o' de ark whar de birds all roosted nex' to de rafters de wood-peckers pecked a lot o' holes, an' de birds all had dey haid a sticken out.

de whole sky an' pile 'em all up on one side o' de sky whar de sun could shine on 'em, an' den he painted on de clouds de biggest an' de purtiest rainbow in de whole worl' wid all de different colors he could think of. An' de two eends o' de rainbow was on de two sides o' de worl', an' de top of it retch nearly up to de top o' de sky. An' while he was a makin' of it ole Mr. Noah an' all his chillen an' his

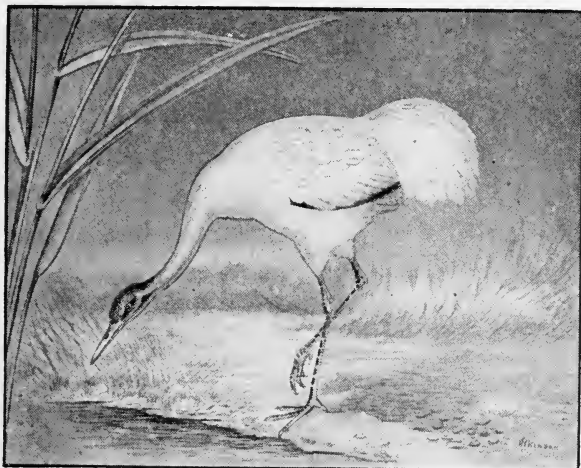
gran'chillen was a peekin' out at de Good Lawd thu' de cracks in de sides o' de ark. But up in de attic o' de ark whar de birds all roosted nex' to de rafters de wood-peckers done pecked a lot o' holes all round under de edge o' de roof, an' de birds all had dey huids a stickin' out an' was a listenin' to de confabs, an' a watchin' what was a gwine on. Well, suh, when de Good Lawd got de rainbow all



An' de birds rose all togedder in one big cloud an' flew todes de big rainbow.

done finished he wave his han' todes de big rainbow, an' he hollered to ole Mr. Noah, "DAH'S MY PROMISE!" Wid dem words he retch over, he did, an' lif' off de whole roof o' de ark, an' de birds dat had bin a roostin' in de attic rose all togedder in one big cloud, an' flew todes de big rainbow up in de sky. An' dey was all so glad, dat dey crowded up

onto de rainbow an' flew right spang through it, while it was all covered wid de colors o' dat fresh paint. An' all de birds dat flew agin' de blue color come out blue birds, an' dem dat flew agin' de red color come out red birds, and dem dat flew agin' de



An' de birds dat missed de rainbow, dey all stayed white jis' like dey was befo' dey come out'n de ark.

yaller color come out yaller birds. But some of 'em feel so happy dey sort o' wallered aroun' in de rainbow an' dey come out all striped and speckled wid de different kinds o' colors. An' de hummin' birds dey flew so fast, an' darted into sich little holes dat

dey got all de colors o' de whole rainbow on dey feathers. An' de birds dat flew off on de other side o' de ark an' missed de rainbow or was scrouged out by de rest of em, dey all stayed white jis like dey was befo' dey come out'n de ark. An' all de birds in de whole worl' from dat time on bin colored des like de ones dat flew into de Good Lawd's big rainbow.

An' dats what mek me tell you, honey, dat you better be careful what kind o' paint you rub against in dis worl', cause it's a gwine to stick to you an' it's a gwine to stick to your chillen too.

THE END





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